

Town of Amenia  
Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee  
January 31st, 2006

Present: Mark Doyle, Rudy Eschbach, Bill Flood, Dolores Holland,  
Darlene Riemer, Tony Robustelli, Joel Russell.  
Guest John Clarke, Dutchess County Planning

The meeting opened with a slide presentation by J. Clarke of a transit-oriented development plan he designed for the Ten Mile River train station area.

J. Clarke again emphasized the advantages of having a concept in place, rather than allowing developers to present their ideas which may not agree with the Town's vision and preferences. He cited the example of Washington Township in New Jersey which employed 'smart growth concepts' for development which avoids suburban sprawl. (See attached article).

J. Clarke said that the area around the Ten Mile River station lends itself perfectly to such a concept as it offers highway access, direct train service to White Plains and New York City and a water and sewer infrastructure with extensive capacity. (See attached "Ten Principles for a Model Greenway-Smart Growth Hamlet")

The parcels covered by the design are Alan Shope's property and a large parcel owned by the State.

Mr. Shope is very interested in this type of development of his property and envisions energy independence, the use of bio fuels and of clean building materials. J. Clarke said that having only two property owners to deal with is a distinct advantage and that, were the State presented with a project which would benefit the Town, cooperation could be obtained. It would be advisable to form a coalition of interest groups (Scenic Hudson, the Audubon Society, Chamber of Commerce, State Development corporation, etc.) and governmental agencies in order to help bring it about.

J. Clarke also suggested that, once the Town approves the basic concept, development could begin on the Shope property where a minimum of outside approval/cooperation is needed. (Part of the development process might be that the developer agrees to clean up those areas which are problematic and turn them into playing fields, (soccer, baseball) - these areas might then be developed in 5 to 10 years as the need arises.)

M. Doyle said that there would be a demand for retail in such a development, which is not addressed in the design and asked how that demand would impact the communities of Amenia and Wassaucott. J. Clarke said that a small convenience store could be included but that

additional shopping would be done in the surrounding communities, which would not present a problem due to the direct access to Route 22.

J. Russell added that the demand for retail in the planned community would be minimal.

M. Doyle asked about affordability. J. Clarke said that all new development is expensive but that, compared to the purchase of a 5 acre subdivision lot, a townhouse or apartment in a hamlet-like development would be much more reasonable and advantageous. He added that, in a plan currently before the Rhinebeck Planning Board, 10% of housing stock is reserved for 'affordable housing' and that a similar plan could be implemented here.

R. Eschbach asked about recreational facilities such as tennis courts - J. Clarke said that the topography does not lend itself to tennis courts but that some form or recreational facility could certainly be included in the plans.

J. Russell suggested including language in Comprehensive Plan to facilitate the Ten Mile River development plan, if the Town agrees to it in principle. J. Clarke said that he has learned that various developers have already enquired about the site and that the Town should make decisions as soon as possible. He added that the first and crucial step is approval by the Town and the second step coalition building and that, with those steps accomplished the plan could become a reality within six months.

A CD of the visual part of the presentation is available for inclusion in the February 18 public meeting.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of the tasks to be performed by J. Russell and the committee prior to the public meeting. J. Russell suggested presenting a brief summary of the zoning draft along with a set of maps. He asked J. Clarke to attend the meeting, if possible, to help answer questions.

The meeting is to take place on February 18th between 1:00 PM and 4:30 PM at the gym of Immaculate Conception church. Committee members are to arrive at 12:30. Webutuck School was discussed as an alternate.

M. Doyle offered to secure a good quality audio system and to set it up.

M. Doyle then suggested putting informational materials such as a summary (divided into sections by subject matter) and chapters of the Zoning Law on the Town website for downloading as well as having the document available for purchase by residents as of February 13th. A number of copies should also be available at the meeting.

J. Russell said that in addition to two to three large maps for

presentation purposes, small copies (100?) should be available for people to take with them. R. Eschbach suggested distributing copies of Article III, Land Use District Regulations (Page 11) along with the Use Table (Page 12).

J. Russell plans to give a 1/2 hour presentation and then answer questions from the floor but offered to have committee members answer questions directly related to specific Town issues. M. Doyle will present and speak about the maps, as he is most familiar with them.

R. Eschbach brought up the subject of mining and suggested using the existing overlay as it clearly identifies current use of all areas suitable for the purpose.

J. Russell said that he needs more time to re-work the section.

Notes to Zoning Draft:

The use of CO was discussed - It was decided to replace that designation with OC - Office/Commercial.

The use of mini storage should be added to 'warehousing' instead of giving it a separate line.

M. Doyle asked to simplify matters by supplying a 'base zoning map' with acronyms along with Land Use Overlay districts: MIXed Use Overlay, Institutional Conversion Overlay, Soil Mining Overlay, Multiple Development Overlay distinguished on the map by either color or 'hatching'. He will work on this.

Stream corridor, flood plain and wetlands will require a separate map which should be termed 'water resources district'. Scenic Overlay District and Aquifer will also have separate maps.

121-9C: Stone wall lines were not included in the zoning boundaries because they are not permanent and can be moved at any time. J. Russell will design language in case a stone wall is used as an overlay boundary,

Restaurant line will include bar/pub.

RR district - wait for input from the public.

121.14B: J. Russell will carve out exceptions for Wassaic.

121.14 F 4: R. Eschbach: Structures should be no higher than 30 feet below the crest line as a general guideline. J. Russell sees problems with that as it is difficult to determine exactly where the crest line is - it depends on ones' location when looking at it - leave the

section as is for now.

121.14.1 E: Change from 15,000 to 10,000 sq.ft.

121.16 I: That number (2 units per acre) could be discussed further and could include density bonuses.

121.18 B: 200 acres for Resort Overlay - should be changed to at least 50 acres for new applications and be within 1.5 miles to the hamlet. If a proposed development does not fall precisely into these guidelines but is similar, the Town may grant a special permit.

121.18 C 3: Architectural/design standards are transferred to new owners who are obligated to abide by them.

121.18 C 6: Change buffer area to 200 feet.

121.27 D 3: Clarify second sentence re: bringing in materials for processing/grandfathered.

121.32 : Crucial to 'copy the Town' - show that all DEC requirements have been met.

121.B b: Should include language to clarify that, when the the property changes to non-agricultural use, the mobile homes have to be removed.

121.E 2: Change to 'agricultural occupations at the farm'.

121.71: Towns have special powers under State Law, and can supercede it.

Language on mining needs to be clarified. J. Russell: "Where soil mining is approved, future use of the land needs to be restricted to agricultural types of uses. My research shows that the most effective way to make that happen is to direct any new applicant to apply to the Town Board for a special permit. Re-zoning can stipulate future uses of the land. Rationale regarding locations will be included in the text of the Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. The operations already in use are in the appropriate overlay districts. Buffers are defined by the DEC - the only way to get the buffers the Town wants is to define the district.

A preexisting mine has the right to expand within the boundaries of its original operation regardless of what the Town zoning says."

Janet Reagon asked for clear language to guide the Town Board especially as it relates to the protection of streams.

B. Flood asked whether the establishment of a mining commission might

not be helpful along with an escrow law, which, combined, would give stronger control to the Town. The Committee agreed that this idea should be incorporated in the text.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6 at 6:00 PM

Submitted for review by  
Monique Montaigne  
February 4, 2006